

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9705

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP

SUBJECT: GOS NOW BANS COMMEMORATION OF ABERRI EGUNA

REF: MADRID 2664

1. IN SPITE OF EARLIER INDICATIONS TO THE CONTRARY
ON THE PART OF THE CIVIL GOVERNOR OF ALAVA (REFTEL)
THE INTERIOR MINISTRY LAST NIGHT RELEASED A NOTE
OFFICIALLY DENYING AUTHORIZATION FOR THE REQUESTED
COMMEMORATION OF ABERRI EGUNA (DAY OF THE BASQUE
FATHERLAND) IN VITORIA ON EASTER SUNDAY. THE NOTE
CITED THE LIKELIHOOD THAT EXTREMIST GROUPS, WHICH
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ALREADY HAVE CALLED FOR A DAY " OF STRUGGLE", WOULD
DISRUPT THE PROCEEDINGS AND THREATEN THE MAINTENANCE
OF PUBLIC ORDER.

2. THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION CAME AFTER INTERIOR
MINISTER MARTIN VILLA MET YESTERDAY WITH
REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE OF THE FOUR SPONSORING

BASQUE POLITICAL PARTIES (PNV, PSOE, AND ESB: THE
PCE REPRESENTATIVE HAD TO WAIT OUTSIDE) DURING
THE MEETING THE THREE BASQUES REPORTEDLY ASSURED
THE INTERIOR MINISTER THAT THEY INTENDED TO PROVIDE
A SECURITY FORCE OF THEIR OWN WHICH WOULD ENSURE
THAT THE RALLY AND MARCH WERE ORDERLY. THEY
REPORTEDLY ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THE PROHIBITION OF
THE COMMEMORATION WOULD PRECIPITATE THE VERY RADICALIZATION
WHICH COULD THREATEN PUBLIC ORDER THAT THEY
AND THE AND THE GOS WANTED TO AVOID.

3. COMMENT, THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A PROHIBITION
OF THIS SORT TO RILE EVEN MODERATE BASQUES AND TO
ENCOURAGE BASQUE EXTREMIST GROUPS TO DO WHAT THEY
CAN TO PROVOKE THE POLICE. PUBLIC ORDER FORCES ARE
CERTAIN TO BE OUT IN STRENGTH IN THE FOUR BASQUE
PROVINCES ON SUNDAY AND CONFRONTATIONS ARE ALMOST
QUARANTEED. EATON

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NNN

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